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RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MUSTAFA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [KDEM](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: HAMAS PREDICTS CHAOS IF INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION
CONTINUES

¶1. (SBU) Summary. In what may appear to be an escalating war of words, Hamas officials, including PM Isma'il Haniyyah, April 14-16 lashed out at U.S., European, and Israeli efforts to isolate and undermine the new Hamas-led government. In comments before tens of thousands of Muslim worshippers in Gaza on April 14, Haniyyah vowed that Palestinians would never submit in the face of international actions to cut off financial assistance. Haniyyah made similar statements during a meeting with Palestinian factional representatives on April 16 where he warned of "total chaos" if his government is brought down. Comments by Haniyyah and others have also indirectly attacked Palestinian Authority (PA) President Abbas and Fatah. End summary.

PM Haniyyah Warns
Of "Total Chaos"

¶2. (SBU) During Friday prayers April 14 in the Gaza Strip, Hamas PM Isma'il Haniyyah told tens of thousands of worshippers that Palestinians were not intimidated by the international community's decision to halt financial assistance to the PA. Haniyyah, who has been previously known for his relatively measured public statements, lashed out that Palestinians would not submit to this form of pressure, adding that "we (Palestinians) are ready to eat only salt and olives" if necessary. In his comments, Haniyyah directed implicit criticism at PA President Mahmud Abbas by noting that Haniyyah is no "stooge" to outside interests. Haniyyah also charged that Abbas had withdrawn powers of the government, such as control over the border crossings and security forces, while leaving no money in the treasury to pay Palestinian salaries.

¶3. (SBU) In separate, harsher comments before Muslim worshippers in the Gaza Strip on April 14, Hamas Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) member Yunis al-Astal warned that Palestinians might opt for Iraqi al-Qa'ida leader "Zarqawi-style" operations if the Hamas government is forced to collapse. He said that the international community would then be forced to deal with a more extreme entity. He also warned against the creation of a parallel "shadow government" that operated alongside the democratically elected Hamas-led government.

Haniyyah Accuses Fatah of
Colluding With Internationals

¶4. (SBU) PM Haniyyah continued his war of words during an April 16 meeting with Palestinian factional representatives, including the PFLP, DFLP, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ),

the Arab Liberation Front, and the Palestine Liberation Front. (Note: Fatah did not participate in the April 16 meeting. End note.) Haniyyah told those in attendance that the U.S., EU, and Israel are conspiring against the PA government. He also suggested that some elements within Fatah are actively colluding with these efforts to undermine the government, and implied that chaos would erupt if this isolation continued. Hamas would not sit idly by to these "unjust policies," Haniyyah reportedly said. In comments similar to those made by PLC member al-Astal on April 14, Haniyyah warned that alternatives to the current PA government would be far more dangerous. Haniyyah encouraged the factions to consider joining the government, adding that there is still time to form a broad coalition.

WALLES